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Khatchaturian

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(54) **COVER DEVICE FOR A LID OF A CONTAINER**

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(51) **Int. Cl.**

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A47G 19/22	(2006.01)
B65B 7/28	(2006.01)
B65D 25/00	(2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC ***B65D 25/00*** (2013.01); ***A47G 19/2211*** (2013.01); ***B65B 7/2842*** (2013.01); ***F21V 33/0036*** (2013.01); *A47G 2019/2238* (2013.01); *Y10T 29/49778* (2015.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC B65D 5/68; B65D 5/685; B65D 25/00; B65D 7/28; B65D 7/2807; B65D 7/2814; B65D 7/2842; Y10T 29/49778; A47G 19/2205; A47G 19/2211; A47G 19/2227; A47G 2019/2238; F21V 33/0024; F21V 33/0036

USPC 220/288, 293, 304, 367.1, 703, 705, 220/711, 713, 716, 718; 362/96, 101, 154; 40/311, 324, 564

See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present invention is directed to a cover device for more hygienic handling of a lid for a container. In general, the cover device fits over the lid and releasably grips the outer surface of the lid. The cover device includes a seating member for sealing an opening in the lid. The cover device may also have paper and/or electronic advertisements. Electronic advertisements are displayed on an LED system in the cover device, and the LED system may transmit and receive wireless data.

14 Claims, 15 Drawing Sheets

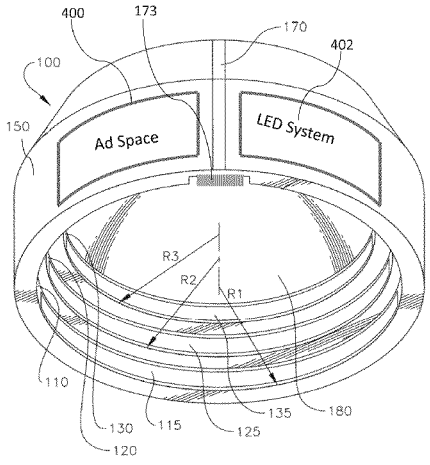

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FIG. 1A

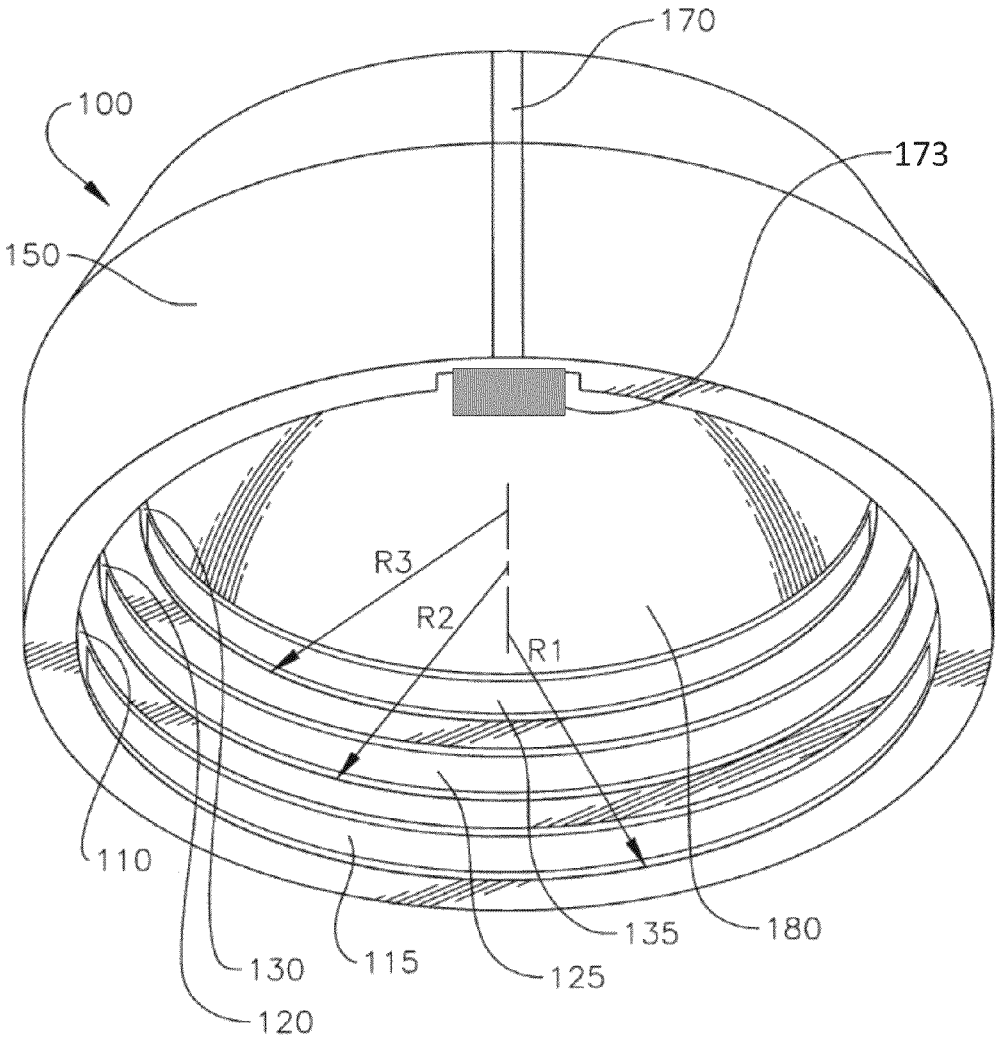


FIG. 1B

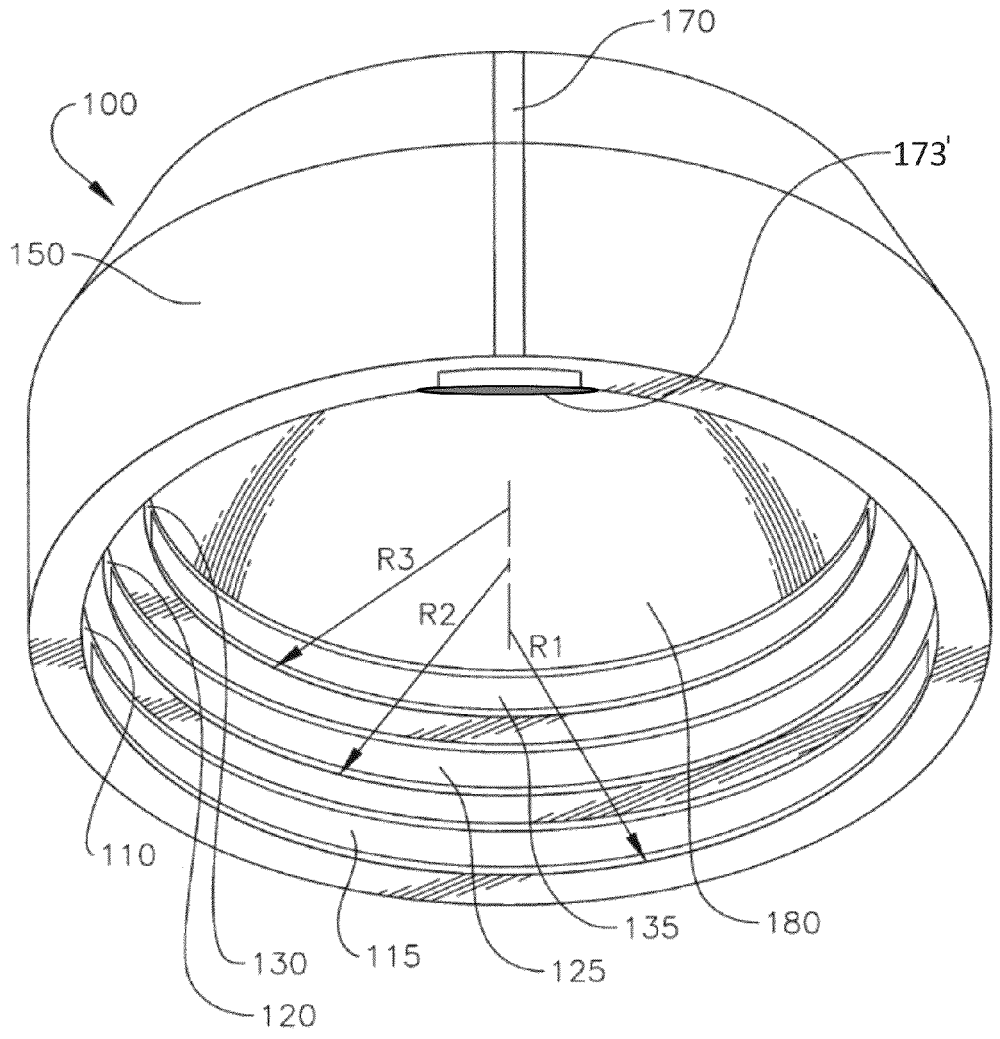


FIG. 1C

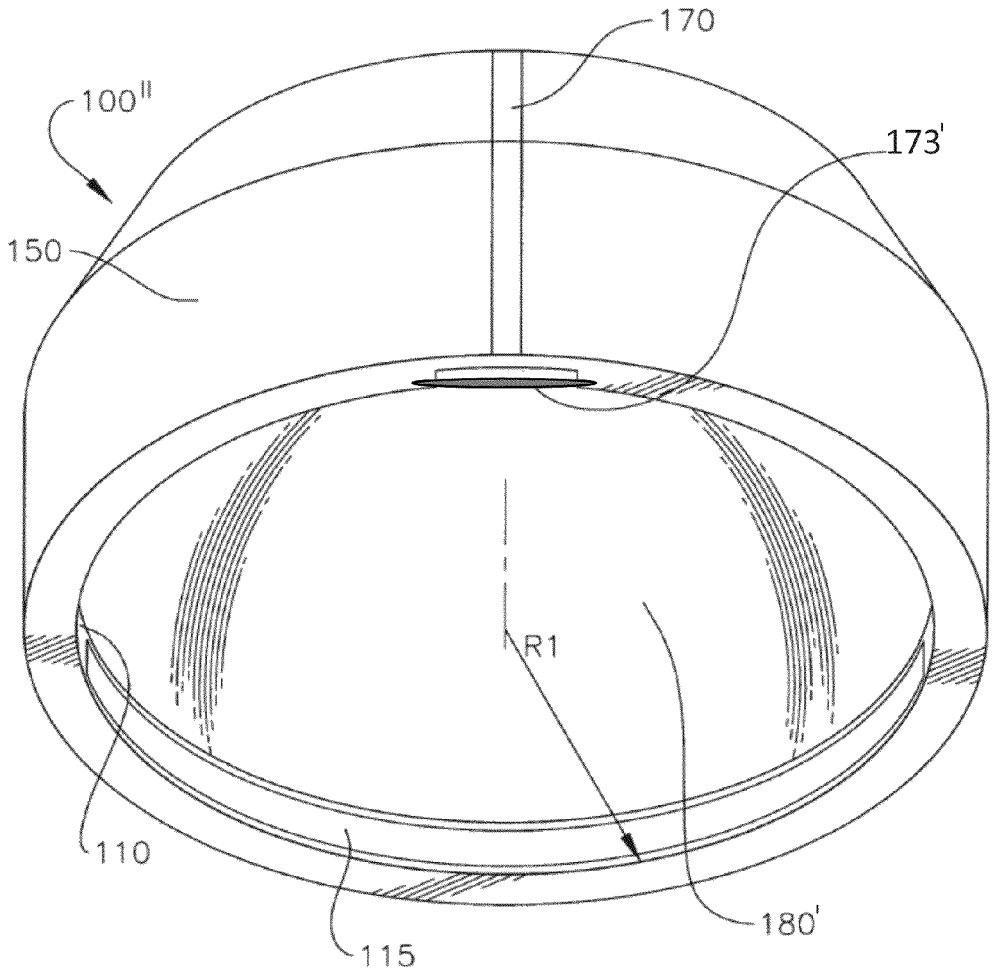


FIG. 2A

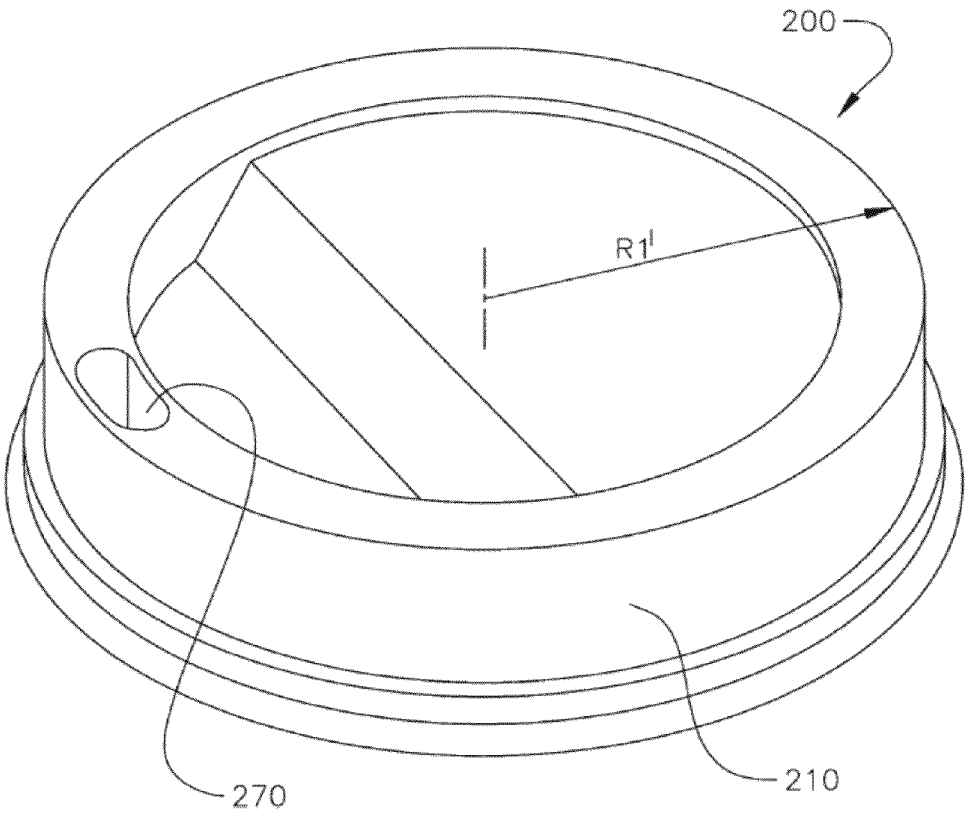


FIG. 2B

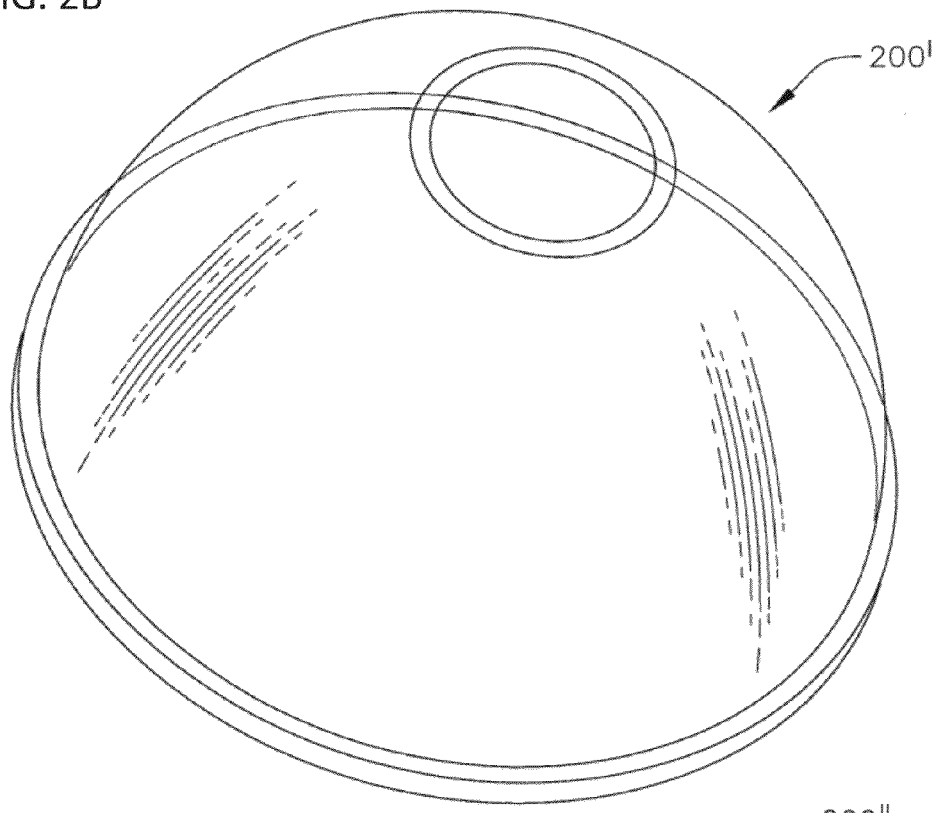


FIG. 2C

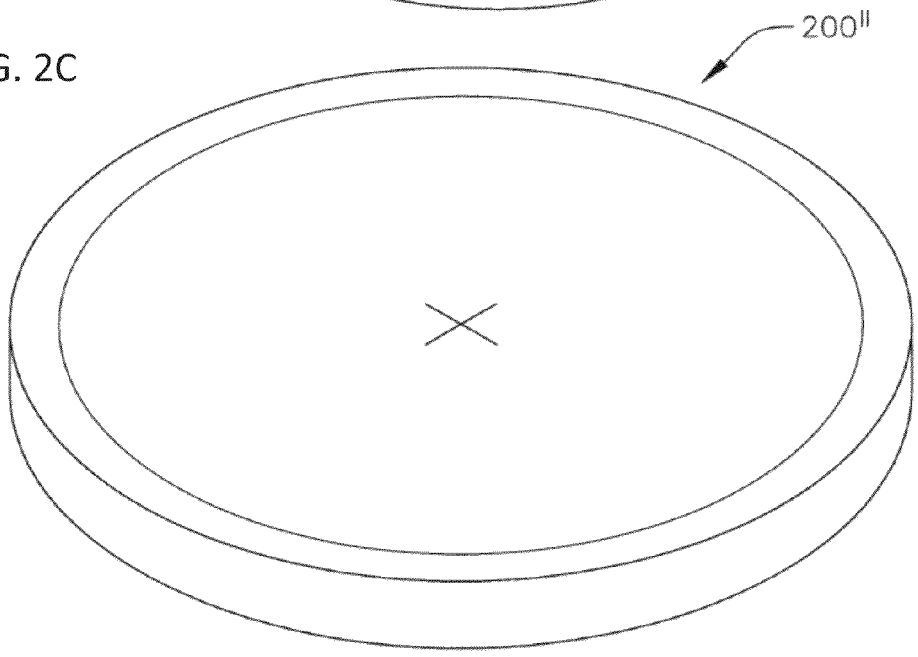


FIG. 3A

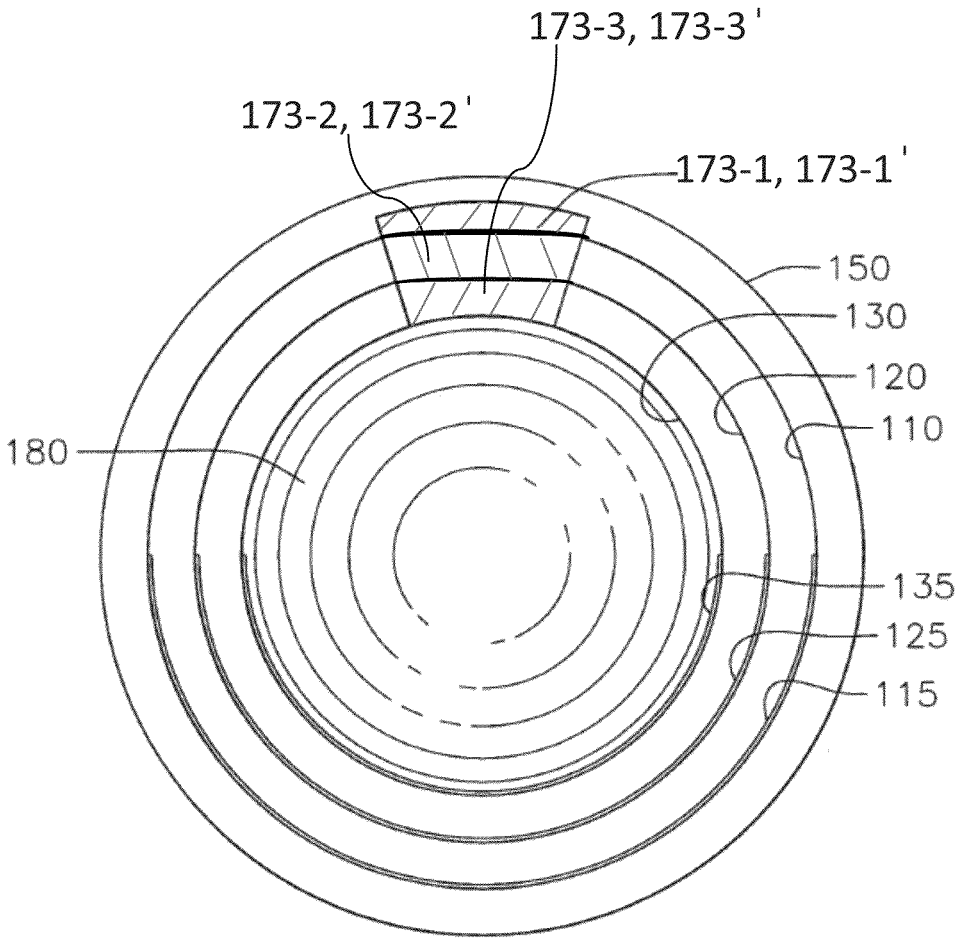


FIG. 3B

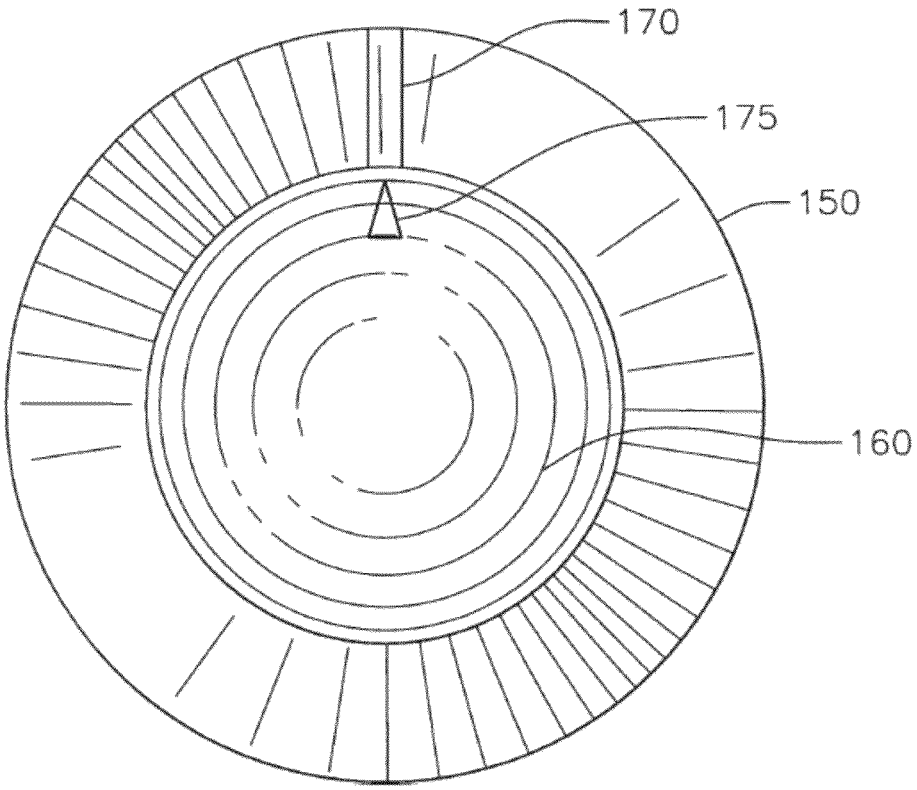


FIG. 3C

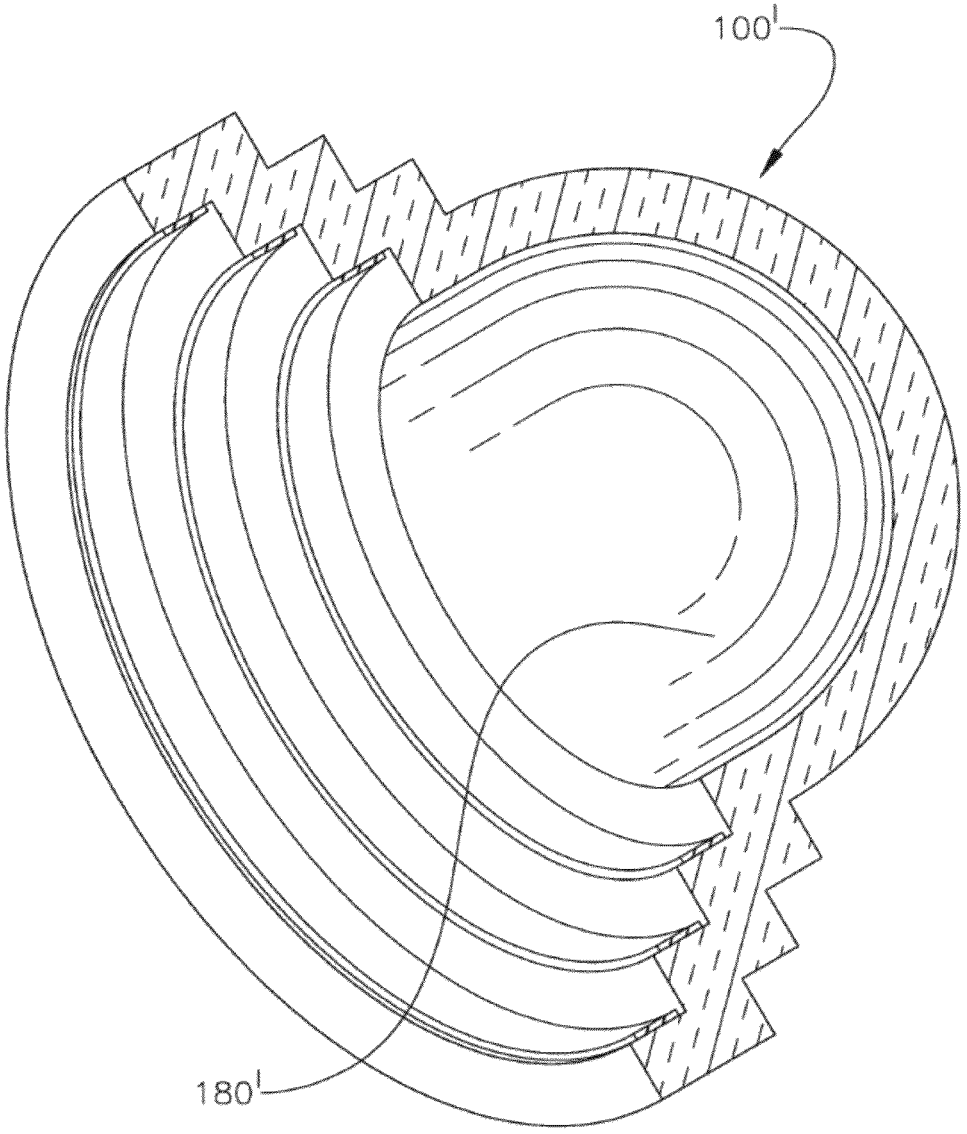


FIG. 4

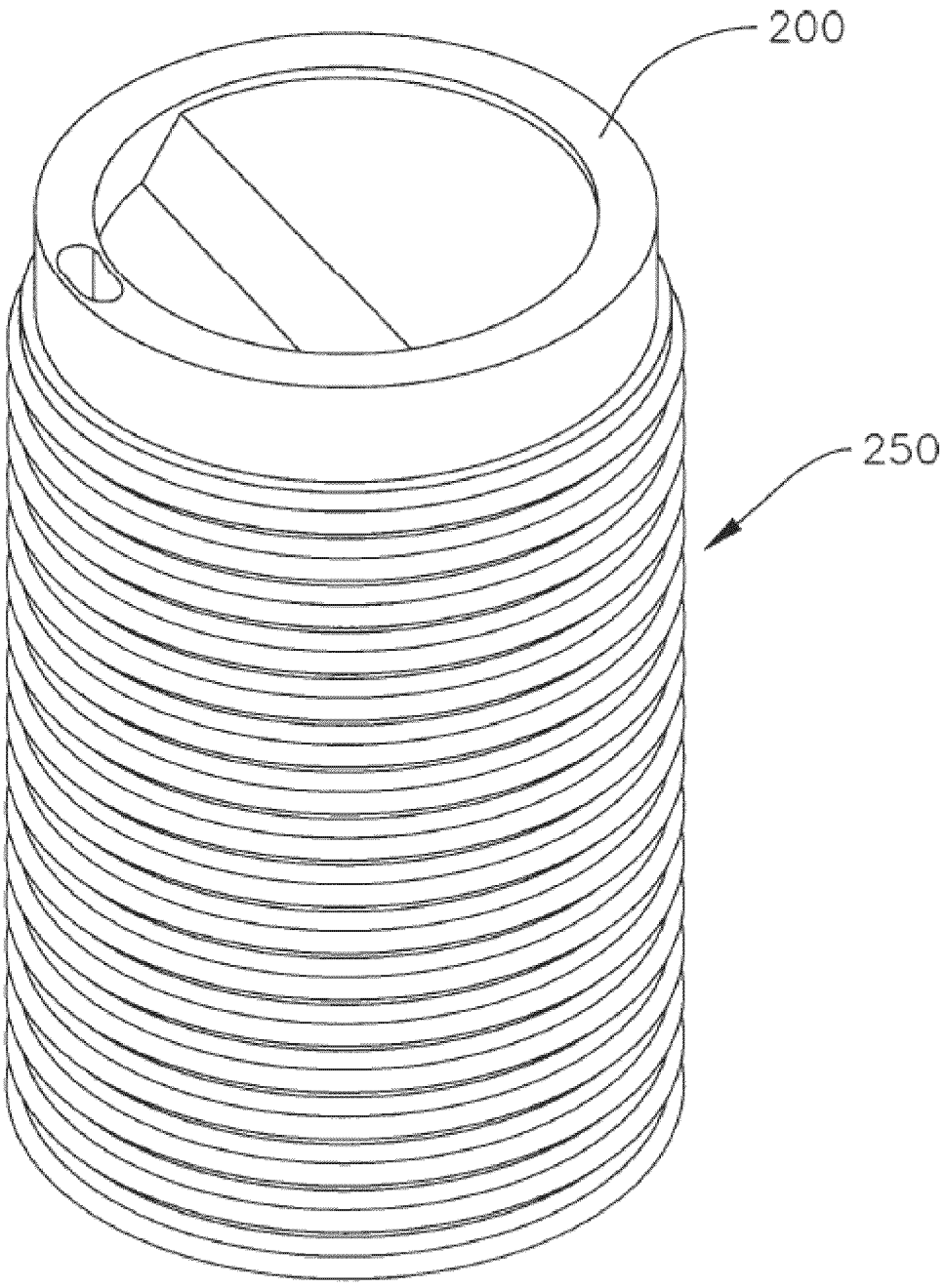


FIG. 5

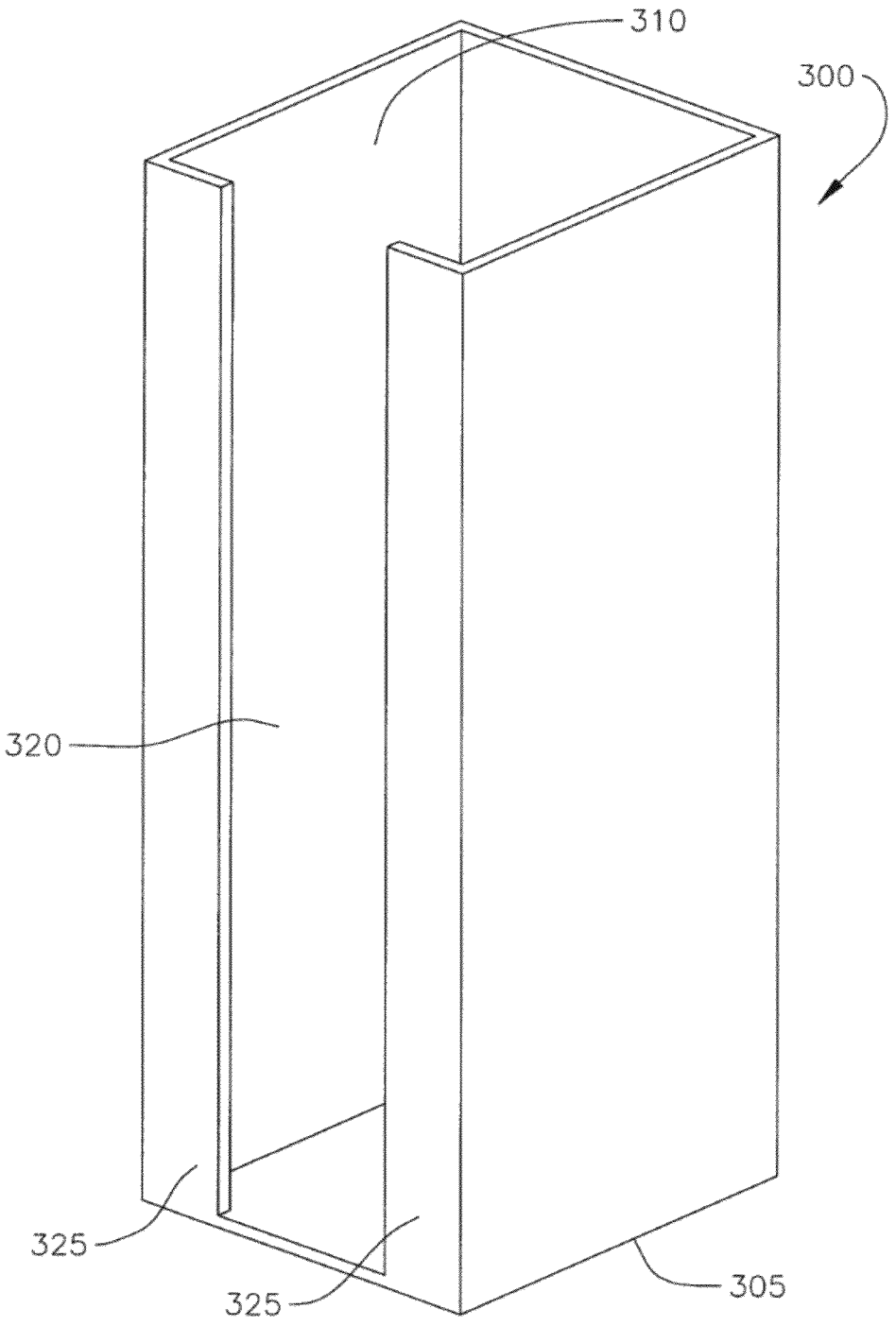


FIG. 6A

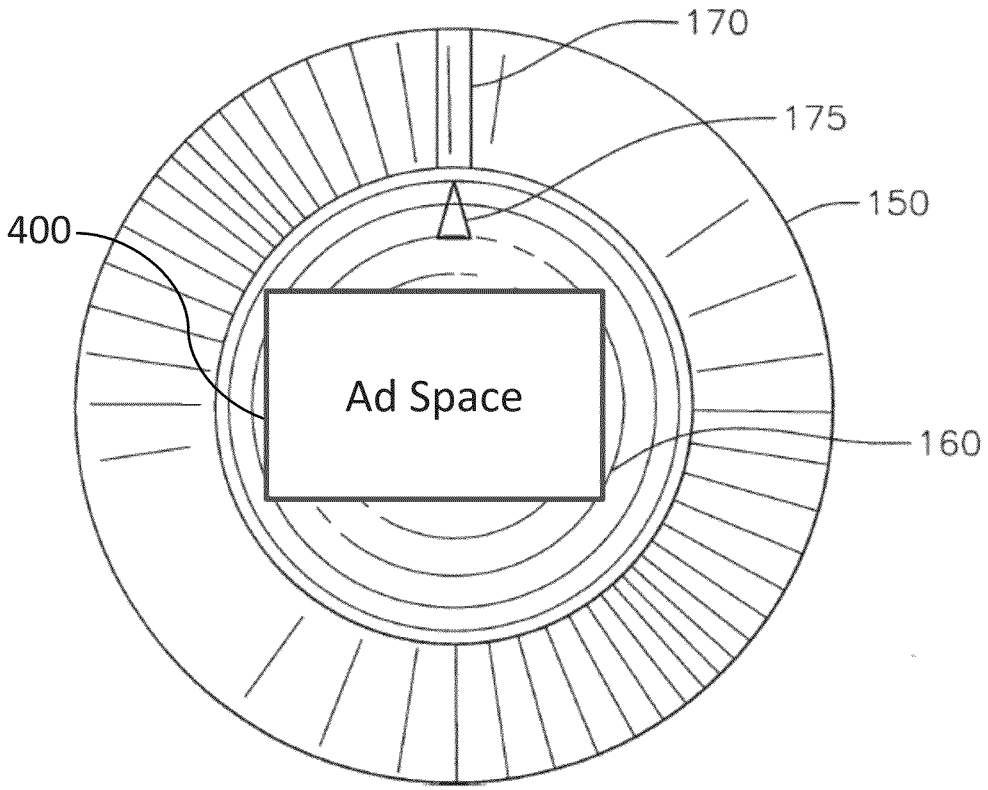


FIG. 6B

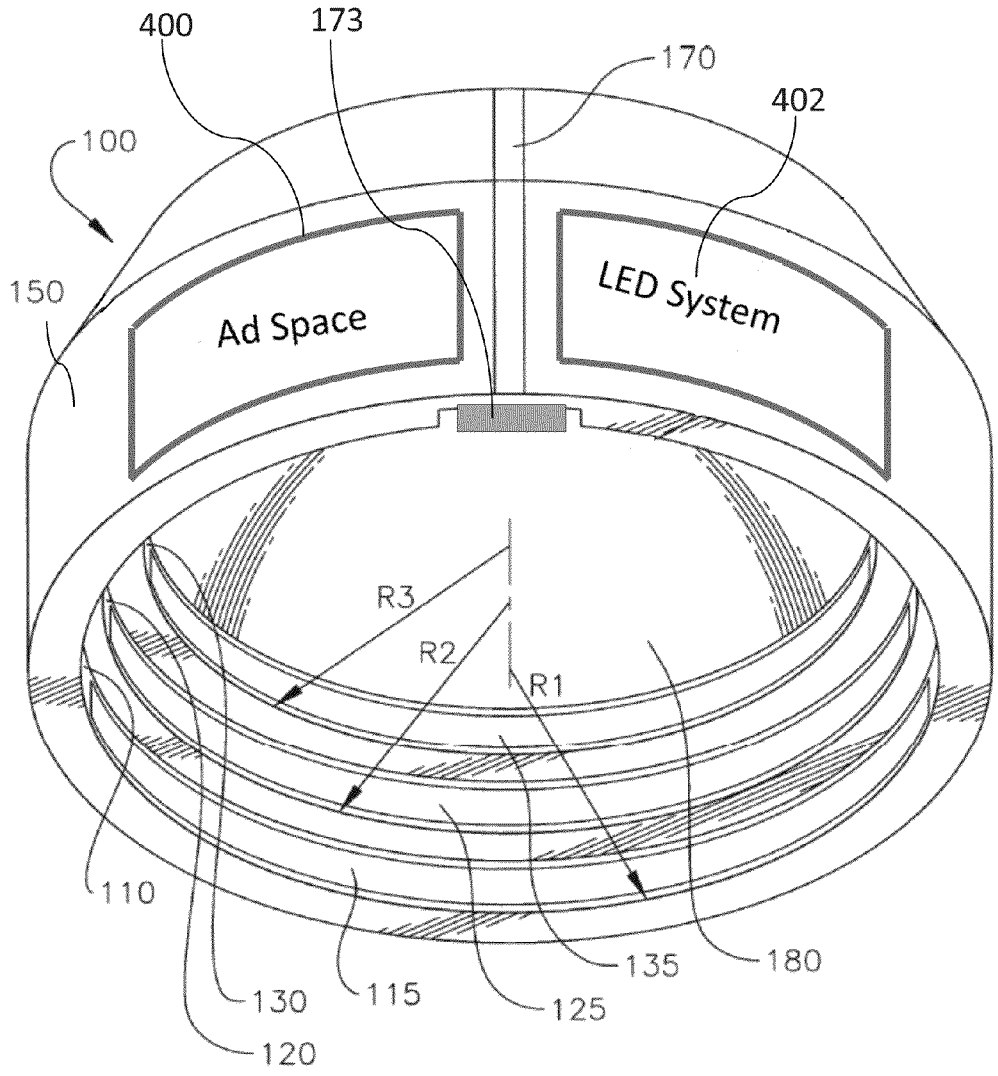

400
173
170
402
100
150
Ad Space
LED System
R3
R2
R1
110
130
120
115
125
135
180

FIG. 6C

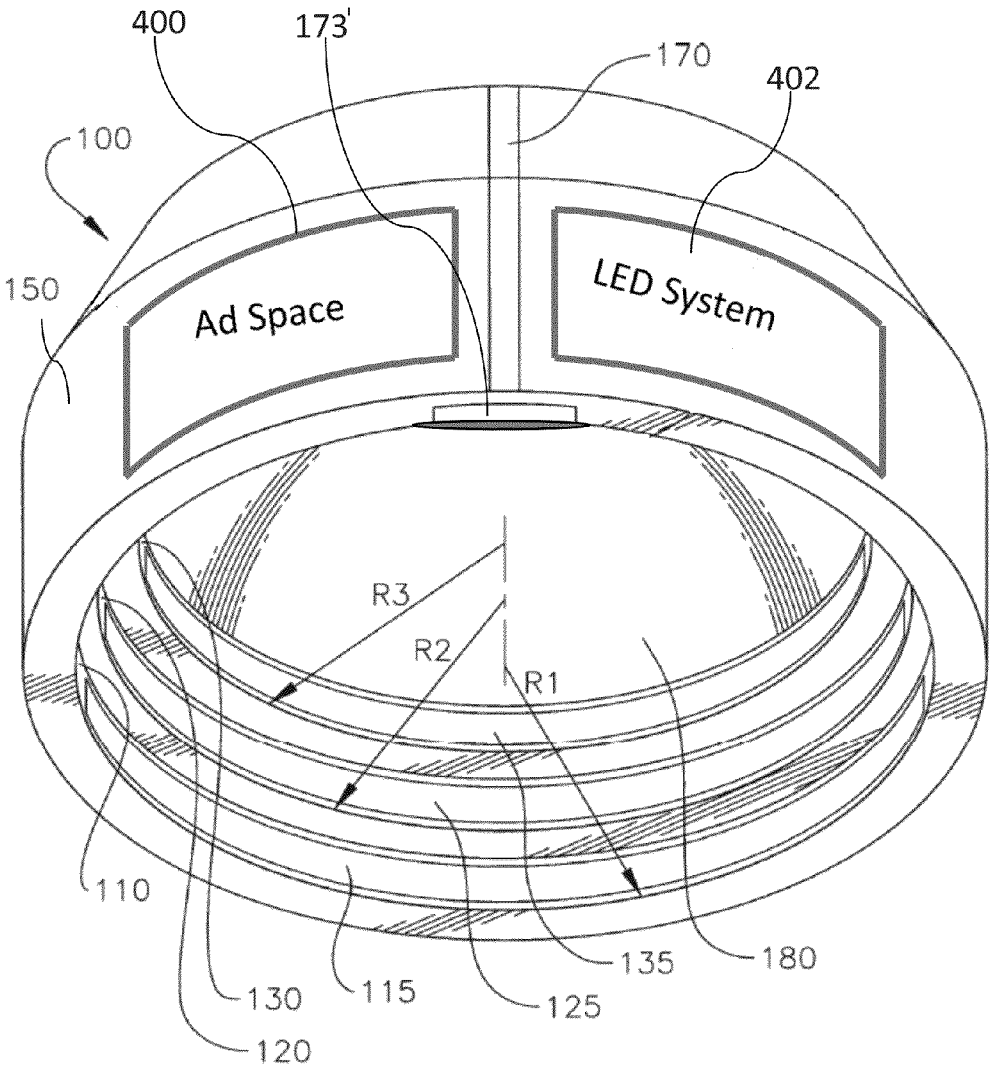

400
173'
170
402
100
150
Ad Space
LED System
R3
R2
R1
110
130
115
125
135
180
120

FIG. 6D

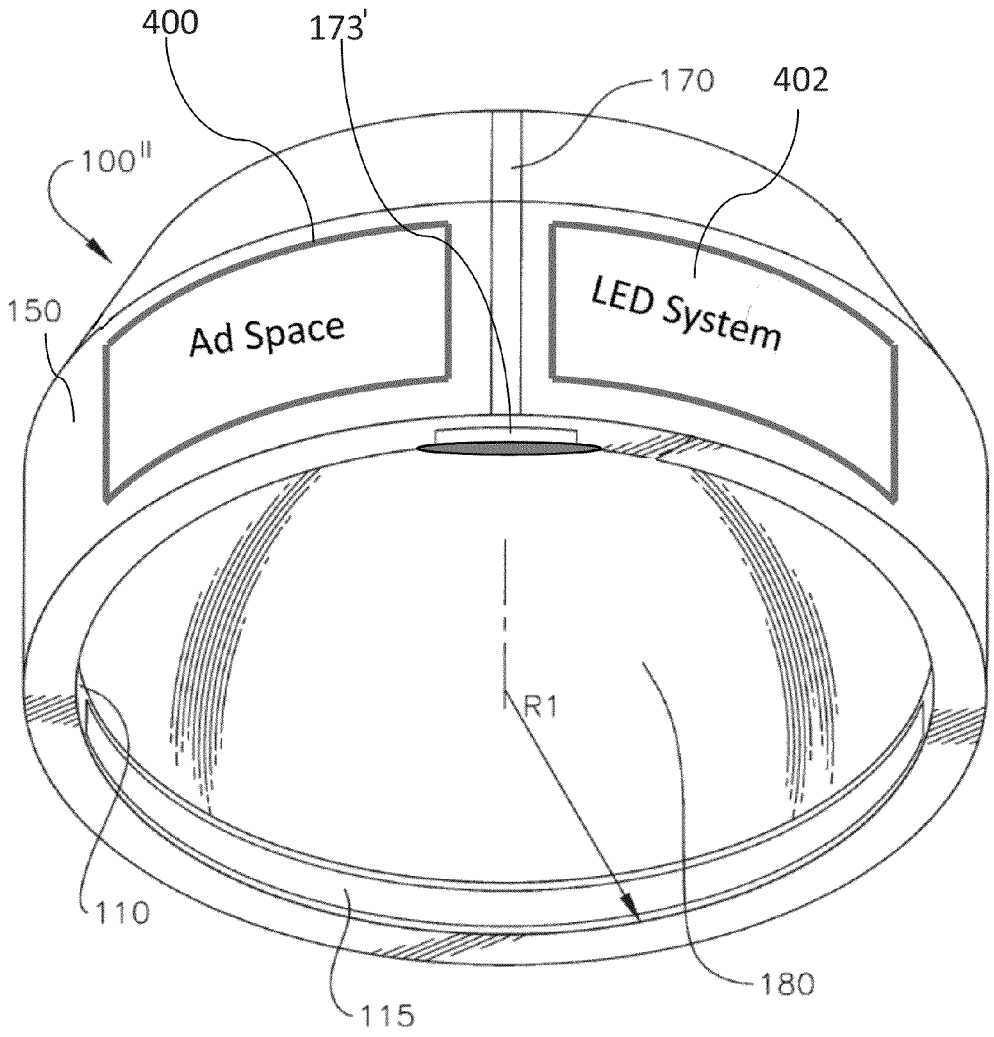
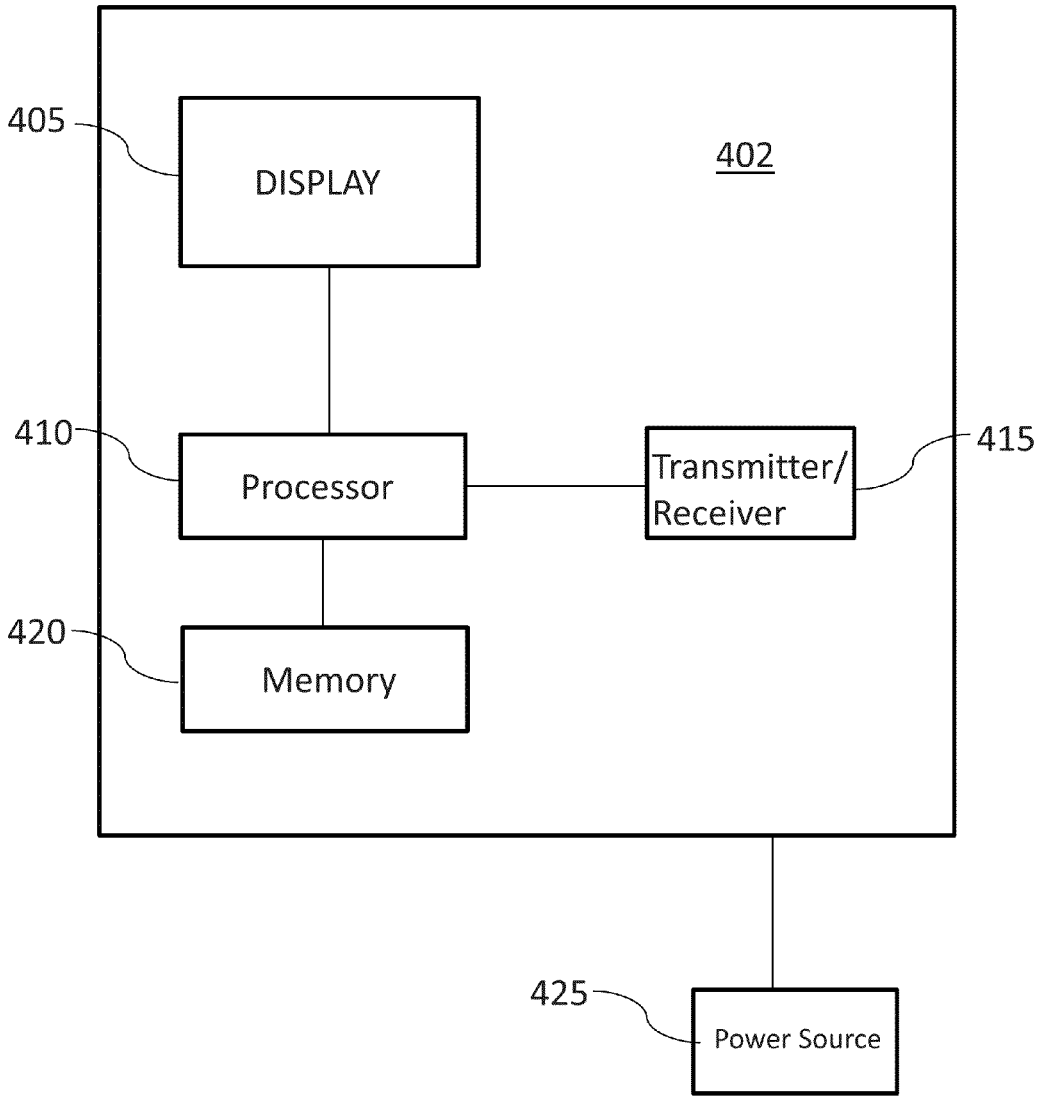


FIG. 7


405
DISPLAY
402
410
Processor
Transmitter/
Receiver
415
420
Memory
425
Power Source

COVER DEVICE FOR A LID OF A CONTAINER

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S)

The present application claims priority to and the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 61/606,298 filed on Mar. 2, 2012, the entire contents of which are incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD

The invention is directed to a cover device for more hygienic, safe and improved handling and use with a lid for a container.

BACKGROUND

Takeout beverages such as coffee and coffee drinks, tea and tea drinks, soft drinks, smoothies, milkshakes, other frozen beverages and other beverages are commonly sold in disposable containers (cups) with plastic lids. Frequently, the server, the customer of a self-service beverage, or other operator manually places the lid on the cup before or after the cup is filled with the beverage. The operator must press around the entire circumference of the lid to ensure that the lid is sealed to the cup to avoid spills. Accidental spills may result if the operator fails to seal around the entire lid. This manual handling can also be unhygienic, especially when the operator touches the inner surface of the lid, which contacts the beverage in the cup, or a drinking opening, which is a part of the lid that is intended to be drunk from without a straw. These beverages are often not consumed upon purchase, or may be consumed slowly and a warm beverage in the cup may decrease in temperature, and a cool beverage in the cup may increase in temperature.

Some establishments that serve beverages attempt to protect the outer surface of the lid from contamination by placing the stack of disposable lids so that the inner surface of the lid is facing up. However, this "upside down" technique allows the inner surface, which contacts the beverage in the cup, to be exposed to possible contamination. This technique also does not prevent. the operator from touching the drinking opening when sealing the lid to the cup.

Additionally, disposable cups are common in public and offer a visible medium for communication.

SUMMARY

An embodiment of the present invention is directed to a cover device for more hygienic, safe and versatile handling of a lid for a container. In general, the cover device fits over the lid and releasably grips the outer surface of the lid, and then seals to the lid. The cover device completely covers the lid thereby imparting additional insulation to the container lid and protecting the lid from contaminants to maintain a clean, hygienic lid. The cover device is also a splash guard retaining any liquid in the container from spilling out of any opening in the lid. In some embodiments, the cover device has a piece, or protrusion that fits into an opening of the lid, thereby plugging the opening and preventing the liquid in the container from spilling. In other embodiments, the cover device has a flat piece that corresponds to and seals an opening in the lid, thereby preventing any liquid in the container from spilling.

In other aspects of the present invention, the cover device for the lid provides a visible surface for advertisements. In some embodiments, the cover device for the lid has print ads attached to it. Additionally, the cover device may be made from print ads. In other embodiments, the cover device includes a space for electronic advertisements. In some embodiments, the cover device has a small light emitting diode (LED) screen. The LED screen may include a battery power supply, and/or photo cell power source. The power source may also include a cell phone connection for electronic advertisements. The LED screen may also include a wireless network access point, e.g. Wifi. In some embodiments, the network access point on the cover device picks up signals from the surroundings, e.g. stores, businesses, stadiums, and provides updates on products or promotions from the surroundings, e.g. score updates and/or promotional products.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

These and other features and advantages of the present invention will be better understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in conjunction with the attached drawings.

FIG. **1**A is a perspective view of a cover device according to an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **1**B is a perspective view of a cover device according to an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **1**C is a perspective view of a cover device according to an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **2**A is a perspective view of a lid.

FIG. **2**B is a perspective view of a dome-shaped lid.

FIG. **2**C is a perspective view of a substantially flat lid.

FIG. **3**A is a bottom view of the cover device according to FIG. **1**A.

FIG. **3**B is a top view of the cover device according to FIG. **1**A.

FIG. **3**C is a cross-sectional perspective view of another embodiment of a cover device.

FIG. **4** is a perspective view of a stack of lids.

FIG. **5** is a perspective view of a container for a stack of lids.

FIG. **6**A is a top view of the cover device of FIG. **3**B having an ad space, according to embodiments of the present invention.

FIG. **6**B is a perspective view of the cover device of FIG. **1**A having print ads and LED system with electronic advertisements, according to embodiments of the invention.

FIG. **6**C is a perspective view of the cover device of FIG. **1**B having print ads and LED system with electronic advertisements, according to embodiments of the invention.

FIG. **6**D is a perspective view of the cover device of FIG. **1**C having print ads and LED system with electronic advertisements, according to embodiments of the invention.

FIG. **7** is a schematic of the LED system in the cover device of FIGS. **6**A, **6**B, and **6**C, according to embodiments of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

With reference to FIGS. **1**A, **1**B, **1**C, and **3**B, a cover device **100** has an outer surface **150**, a top **160** and an inner chamber or cavity **180**. The cover device **100** is configured to engage and grip a lid **200** (e.g., as shown in FIG. **2**A) for a container, to then be placed on the container (cup) and sealed to the lid using the cover device. In one embodiment, the cover device is substantially cylindrical with an open end and a closed end. In this embodiment, the outer surface is formed by the wall of

the cylinder, the closed end forms the top **160**, and the inner chamber or cavity **180** is formed in the open end.

An operator holds the cover device **100** by the outer surface **150**. In the embodiment. shown in FIGS. **1**A, **1**B, and **1**C, the outer surface **150** is cylindrical. However the outer surface may be formed to any shape or size compatible with the inner chamber or cavity **180**. For example, the outer surface **150** may be asymmetric, domed, cupped, ergonomically shaped or otherwise shaped. The outer surface **150** may further include a handle or other feature that is decorative or assists the operator in handling the cover device **100**.

With reference to FIGS. **1**A, **1**B, and **1**C, the inner chamber or cavity **180** of the cover device includes a first inner engagement surface **110** configured to engage with the lid **200** by having a shape that is substantially congruous to at least a part of the lid **200**. In one embodiment, the lid **200** includes a cylindrical outer surface **210** having a radius of R**1'** (shown in FIG. **2**A). In this embodiment, the first inner engagement surface **110** is a cylindrical surface having a radius of R**1** and is configured to be substantially parallel to the outer surface **210** of the lid **200** when the cover device **100** engages the lid **200**. R**1** may be slightly larger than R**1'** but is sized to allow the first inner engagement surface **110** to fit in sealing engagement with the lid **200**.

The inner chamber or cavity **180** is configured to allow engagement between the first inner engagement surface **110** with the outer surface **210** of the lid **200** by having sufficient space to receive parts of the lid **200** that protrude above the outer surface **210** of the lid **200** that is engaged by the cover device **100**. In particular, as shown in FIG. **1**A, a portion of the outer surface **210** of the lid **200** may extend into the inner chamber or cavity **180** when the cover device **100** is placed over the lid **200**. The cover device **100** and the inner chamber or cavity **180** may take any size or shape to accommodate any size, type or number of lids. For example, the inner chamber or cavity **180** may be sized and shaped to fit a lid typically used to cover hot beverages, as shown in FIG. **2**A. Alternatively, as shown in FIG. **3**C, a cover device **100'** may have a more domed shape with a dome-shaped inner chamber or cavity **180'** for fitting a lid **200'** typically used on frozen beverages such as milkshakes, smoothies or the like, as shown in FIG. **2**B. In embodiments like this, the cover device can have a hole in any position to accommodate a straw. As another example, the cover device may be substantially flat with only enough space in the inner chamber or cavity **180** to accommodate a lid **200"** generally used to cover soft drinks, as shown in FIG. **2**C.

To assist in the sealing of the lid **200**, the first inner engagement surface **110** of the cover devices of FIGS. **1**A, **1**B, and **1**C, may have a first sealing segment **115**. In one embodiment, the first sealing segment **115** covers all or a portion of the first inner engagement surface **110**. The sealing segment **115** may include, by way of example, a textured surface, a layer of adhesive, or a rubber or rubberized layer. However, the sealing segment is not limited in this manner, and can include any mechanism for enhancing the grip and seal of the device on the lid. For example, an alternative sealing segment may include a series of spring-loaded ball bearings, a tube insert in a cavity, a rubber tube or similar, or the like.

In one embodiment, the lid **200** has a drinking opening **270** that a consumer may drink from. In one embodiment, shown in FIGS. **1**A and **3**A, the first engagement portion **110** of the cover device includes a protrusion **173** for insertion into the opening **270** of the lid. When the protrusion **173** is in the opening **270** of the lid, and the lid is fitted onto the container, the liquid in the container is less likely to spill out of the opening. Additionally, when the cover device **100** is fitted to the lid **200** that is fitted to a container, the liquid in the container is further insulated by the cover device **100**. The cover device may have an optional indicator arrow **175** on the top **160** and/or an optional indicator line **170** along the outer surface **150** that indicates the location of the protrusion **173** to guide placement of the cover device **100** over the drinking opening **270** of the lid **200**. This is useful, for example, for more efficient and faster fitting of the cover device **100** onto the lid **200**.

In some embodiments, the protrusion **173** is made from any suitable material. For example, the protrusion is made from rubber or plastic. In an alternative embodiment, the cover device has a flat sealing member **173'** (shown in FIG. **1**B) that fits over the drinking opening **270**, but does not insert into the opening **270**. The flat sealing member **173'** is made from any suitable material, and for example, can be made from rubber or plastic.

In another embodiment, the outer surface **210** of the lid **200** is asymmetric and the indicator arrow **175** and/or indicator line **170** assist in aligning the cover device **100** with the lid **200** to allow the cover device **100** to effectively engage and grip the lid **200**.

In one embodiment, the cover device **100** has more than one engagement surface so that a single cover device can be used to place differently sized lids on containers of different size or type. For example, the cover device **100** shown in FIGS. **1**A, **1**B, and **3**A has three engagement surfaces **110**, **120** and **130**. Each engagement surface **110**, **120** and **130** may have a sealing segment **115**, **125** and **135**, and a protrusion **173-1**, **173-2** and/or **173-3**, in a cover device as shown in FIGS. **1**A and **3**A, or a flat sealing member **173-1'**, **173-2'**, and/or **173-3'** in a cover device as shown in FIGS. **1**B and **3**A. The first engagement surface **110** has an inner radius of R**1** and is configured to grip a first lid with an outer surface radius of R**1'**. Similarly, the second engagement surface **120** has an inner radius of R**2** and is configured to grip a second lid with an outer surface radius of R**2'**, and the third engagement surface **130** has an inner radius of R**3** and is configured to grip a third lid with an outer surface radius of R**3'**. R**2'** and R**3'** each correspond to the radius of a lid having a smaller diameter than the lid shown in FIG. **2**A having a radius of R**1'**. That is, a lid having a radius of R**2'** has a smaller diameter than a lid having a radius of R**1'**, and a lid having a radius of R**3'** has a smaller diameter than a lid having a radius of R**2'**.

R**2** and R**2'** and R**3** and R**3'** have dimensions that satisfy the conditions stated above with reference to R**1** and R**1'**, R**2** and R**2'** and R**3** and R**3'**. As shown in FIG. **3**A, the first engagement portion **110**, the second engagement portion **120** and the third engagement portion **130** include protrusions **173-1**, **173-2**, and/or **173-3** that insert into the drinking opening **270**. Alternatively, the cover device may have a single engagement surface to accommodate lids having outer surfaces of the same radius but having different shapes or forms above or below the outer surface. In one embodiment, the cover device has two engagement surfaces and two protrusions (**173-1**, **173-2**) or flat sealing members (**173-1'**, **173-2'**) to accommodate two lid sizes for even greater versatility. Yet another embodiment may have more than three engagement surfaces and three protrusions (**173-1**, **173-2**, **173-3**) or flat sealing members (**173-1'**, **173-2'**, **173-3'**) to accommodate more than three lid sizes or types and drinking opening positions.

Another embodiment of the cover device **100"**, shown in FIG. **1**C, is designed for use with only one type of lid, for example the lid shown in FIG. **2**A. The cover device **100"** has one engagement surface **110** having a radius of R**1**, where R**1** is sized as described above in reference to cover device **100**. In an embodiment, the cover device **100"** has a sealing seg-

ment **115** and one protrusion **173**, or flat sealing member **173'** which are substantially the same as the sealing segment **115** and protrusion **173** or flat sealing member **173'**, as described above in reference to the cover device **100**.

As discussed in various embodiments above, the cover device of the present invention fits over a lid and releasably grips the outer surface of the lid. When the cover device completely covers the lid, it provides additional insulation to the container lid and protects the lid from contaminants to maintain a clean, hygienic lid. A cover device when fitted to a lid is also a splash guard retaining any liquid in the container from spilling out of the opening in the lid. In some embodiments, the cover device has a piece, or protrusion that fits into an opening of the lid, thereby plugging the opening and preventing the liquid in the container from spilling.

In some embodiments, the cover device may be made of any suitable material, without limitation. For example, the cover device may be made of a disposable material and therefore may be disposable. Alternatively, the cover device may he made of a durable material and may be reusable.

The cover device is not limited to using only friction to grip the lids, but may grip the lid by other methods, such as vacuum, suction cups or magnets.

The embodiments described herein include lids for containers. The lid may be a lid for any type of container, for example a lid for a cup, bowl, or other container. The lid may he disposable or reusable. The cup, howl or other container may be disposable or reusable, In one embodiment, the sealing device is configured to place a disposable lid onto a disposable cup. Alternatively, the cover device may be used to engage any type of object.

The embodiments described herein include a cover device of various thicknesses. That is, the thickness of the cover device of the present invention is not limited and may be increased to fit a variety of lid sizes and provide more insulation, and the cover device may he less thick to appear more sleek. The cover device may be sleek and may be configured to fit one size lid, or sleek and fitting more than one size lid.

To use the cover device **100**, the operator fits the cover device **100** over the lid **200** of the container. When the cover device **100** is placed over the lid **200**, the engagement surface **110**, the sealing segment **115** and possibly the inner chamber or cavity **180** acts to grip the lid **200**. In another embodiment, vacuum, suction cups or magnets may be used to grip the lid **200**. The lid **200** is not released until after the lid is placed on the container. Once the operator has placed the cover device **100** and lid **200** over the container, the operator presses the cover device **100** toward the container, which in turn presses the lid **200** toward the cup to facilitate sealing of the lid **200** around the entire circumference of the container. The cover device **100** thereby increases safety by preventing accidental spills from improperly sealed lids. By using the cover device **100**, the lid **200** may be handled and sealed onto the container without the operator's hand touching any part of the lid **200** itself.

In one embodiment, the cover device can be used to engage and handle a lid on a stack of a plurality of lids **250**, as shown in FIG. **4**. The cover device **100** is fitted over the topmost lid **200** on the stack **250** to engage that lid and remove the lid from the stack for transfer to a cup. The cover device is then used, as discussed above, to place, cover, and seal the lid on the cup.

In another embodiment, as shown in FIG. **5**, the stack of lids **250** is disposed in a stack container **300** that holds the stack of lids secure and prevents or reduces environmental contamination of the stack of lids. In addition, the stack container **300** allows a topmost lid **200** of the stack **250** to be engaged by the cover device **100**. In one embodiment, the stack container **300** is in the shape of a tall rectangular prism resting on a bottom face **305**. The stack container **300** has an open top **310** and an open side **320**. The open side **320** includes a retaining feature **325** along each edge extending from the bottom face **305** toward the open top **310**. The stack **250** can be loaded into the stack container **300** from the open top **310**, and the retaining features **325** prevent the stack **250** from spilling out of the open side **320** of the stack container. The retaining features **325** are dimensioned to allow a user to use the cover device **100** to grip the top lid **200** of the stack **250** and remove the cover device and the engaged lid from the stack container **300** via the open top **310**. In addition, the stack container **300** and retainer features **325** are dimensioned to allow the user to engage a final lid resting on the bottom of the stack container.

In one embodiment, the cover device **100** is stored in a device container when not in use. For example, the device container may be a dish or a tray. The device container allows the cover device **100** to be easily grasped by the user. In addition, the device container prevents or reduces environmental contamination of the cover device **100**. As would be understood by those of ordinary skill in the art, the device container can take on any size or shape suitable for containing or fitting the cover device. Also, if desired, and depending on the composition of the cover device, the device container may include a non-toxic sterilizing or sanitizing solution to keep the sealing device sterile or sanitary between uses.

In other aspects of the present invention, the cover device for a lid (**100**) (as shown in FIGS. **6**A, **6**B, **6**C, and **6**D) may provide one or more surfaces for advertisements, referred to as an advertisement space or ad space (**400**). For example, the top (**160**) of the cover device (shown in FIG. **6**A) and/or the circumferential side surface (**150**) of the cover device (shown in EEGs. **6**B, **6**C, and **6**D) may include an ad space (**400**). In some embodiments, the cover device for the lid has print ads attached to it. Additionally, the cover device may be made wholly or partially from print ads. In other embodiments, the cover device has a small LED system (**402**) in the ad space (**400**). In some embodiments, the LED system (**402**) includes an LED display (**405**) and is positioned on the circumferential side surface (**150**) of the cover device to display advertisements in the form of a ticker, similar to the ticker for a stock report. In other embodiments, the cover device having an LED system (**402**) displays electronic advertisements. The cover devices shown in FIGS. **6**B, **6**C, and **6**D, have both the paper and electronic advertisements in one cover device. However, a cover device may include both paper and electronic advertisements, or may only have one of these modes of advertisement in one or both positions on the side surface (**150**) and/or the top (**160**).

As shown in FIG. **7**, the LED system (**402**) on the cover device also includes a processor (**410**) which is in connection with a transmitter/receiver (**415**) and separately in connection with a memory source (**420**). The LED system (**402**) n ay also include a battery power supply (**425**), and/or photo cell power source. The power source may also include a cell phone connection for electronic advertisements. Electronic advertisements are advertisements including information such as news, displayed on an LED display. The LED system may also include a wireless network access point, e.g. Wifi and Bluetooth, that utilizes the transmitter/receiver of the LED system to transmit data. in some embodiments, the network access point on the cover device picks up signals from the surroundings (e.g. stores, businesses, stadiums) and provides updates on products or promotions from the surroundings (e.g. score updates and/or promotional products). In an addi-

tional embodiment, the power source and LED system communicate with other electronic devices, for example, an iPod, or similar devices.

While the present invention has been illustrated and described with reference to certain exemplary embodiments, those of ordinary skill in the art understand that various modifications and changes may be made to the described embodiments without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A gripping device for hygienically placing a lid on a container, the gripping device comprising:

an outer surface; and

an inner wall comprising:

a continuous first engagement surface extending substantially around a first inner circumference of the inner wall and being sized to fit the lid of the container; and

a continuous second engagement surface extending substantially around a second inner circumference of the inner wall and being sized to fit a second lid of a second container, the second inner circumference being longitudinally offset from the first inner circumference, and the second inner circumference being smaller than the first circumference,

wherein only a portion of the continuous first engagement surface comprises a first sealing segment made from a material selected from the group consisting of a textured surface, a layer of adhesive, a rubber, a rubberized layer and combinations thereof.

2. The gripping device according to claim **1**, wherein the inner wall further comprises a continuous third engagement surface being sized to fit a third lid of a third container.

3. The gripping device according to claim **1**, wherein the first engagement surface and the inner wall are configured to contact at least two lids of differing types.

4. The gripping device according to claim **1**, further comprising at least one advertisement space on a top surface of the gripping device or on the outer surface of the gripping device.

5. The gripping device according to claim **4**, wherein the at least one advertisement space is configured to accommodate a print advertisement and/or an electronic advertisement.

6. The gripping device according to claim **4**, wherein the advertisement space comprises a light emitting diode (LED) system.

7. The gripping device according to claim **6**, wherein the LED system includes a display, a processor, a transmitter/receiver, a memory, and a power source.

8. The gripping device of claim **7**, wherein the display is configured to display at least one electronic advertisement.

9. The gripping device of claim **7**, wherein the transmitter/receiver of the LED system is a wireless transmitter/receiver that is configured to wirelessly transmit and receive data.

10. A method of hygienically placing a lid on a container using a gripping device, the gripping device comprising:

an outer surface, and

an inner wall defining an inner cavity and comprising a continuous first engagement surface extending substantially around a first inner circumference of the inner wall and being sized to engage the lid of the container;

the method comprising:

gripping the lid by engaging the first engagement surface with the lid such that the lid is housed in the inner cavity of the gripping device;

placing the gripping device and lid housed in the gripping device on the container, and

pressing the gripping device on the container until the lid engages the container; and

after the lid engages the container, disengaging the lid from the first engagement surface by removing the gripping device from the container.

11. The method according to claim **10**, wherein the first engagement surface is made from a material selected from the group consisting of a textured surface, a layer of adhesive, a rubber, a rubberized layer and combinations thereof.

12. The method according to claim **10**, wherein the inner wall further comprises a second continuous engagement surface being sized to fit a second lid of a second container.

13. The method according to claim **12**, wherein the inner wall further comprises a third continuous engagement surface being sized to fit a third lid of a third container.

14. The method according to claim **10**, wherein the first engagement surface and the inner wall are configured to grip at least two lids of differing types.

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